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# AMERICAN ARCHIVIST

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**About the Cover**

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This photograph shows James K. Vardaman, Mississippi governor (1904–1908) and U.S. senator (1913–1919) speaking to a large group of spectators. A charismatic and powerful orator, Vardaman was known for his populism and extreme racist politics. His followers called him “The White Chief.” In this issue, Patricia Galloway examines the relationship between archives and power in her study of Dunbar Rowland and the founding of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, the second state archives in the United States. Rowland indeed recognized and embraced the power of archives, albeit for the “biased and interested purpose” of bolstering the power of his race and class. Vardaman as a populist was an enemy of Rowland and his planter connections, and in 1912 the Vardaman-controlled legislature denied funding for the Department of Archives and History. The photograph evokes the power of images from archives, its power enhanced by its authenticity and its fragility. (Photograph courtesy of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, PI 1988.0003 item number 2.)

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# AMERICAN ARCHIVIST

<b>Gallery of Contributors</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Forum</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>From the Editor</b>	
<b>Images and Initiatives</b>	<b>16</b>
Mary Jo Pugh	
<b>Presidential Address</b>	
<b>Embracing the Power of Archives</b>	<b>19</b>
Randall C. Jimerson	
<b>Theodore Calvin Pease Award</b>	
<b>Sound Practices: On-line Audio Exhibits and the Cultural Heritage Archive</b>	<b>33</b>
Ian Craig Breaden	
<b>Articles</b>	
<b>An Obligation of Trust: Speculations on Accountability and Description</b>	<b>60</b>
Laura Millar	
<b>Archives, Power, and History: Dunbar Rowland and the Beginning of the State Archives of Mississippi (1902–1936)</b>	<b>79</b>
Patricia Galloway	
<b>Political Democracy and Archival Development in the Management of Presidential Records in the Republic of Korea</b>	<b>117</b>
Kyong Rae Lee	
<b>Building Preservation Environments with Data Grid Technology</b>	<b>139</b>
Reagan W. Moore	
<b>“The Old Version Flickers More”: Digital Preservation from the User’s Perspective</b>	<b>159</b>
Margaret L. Hedstrom, Christopher A. Lee, Judith S. Olson, and Clifford A. Lampe	

<b>Digital Preservation Education: Educating or Networking?</b>	<b>188</b>
Wendy M. Duff, Amy Marshall, Carrie Limkilde, and Marlene van Ballegooie	

## Reviews

Richard Pearce-Moses, <b>A Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology</b>	<b>213</b>
Reviewed by Geof Huth	
Mary Jo Pugh, <b>Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts</b>	<b>216</b>
Reviewed by Nora Murphy	
Trudy Huskamp Peterson, <b>Final Acts: A Guide to Preserving the Records of Truth Commissions</b>	<b>219</b>
Reviewed by Joel Wurl	
Elizabeth H. Dow, <b>Creating EAD-Compatible Finding Guides on Paper</b>	<b>222</b>
Reviewed by Susan von Salis	
Susan Swan, <b>What Casanova Told Me</b>	<b>225</b>
Reviewed by Carol Ellis	
Kathleen D. Roe, <b>Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts</b>	<b>228</b>
Reviewed by Susan E. Davis	
Robert F. Berkhofer III, <b>Day of Reckoning: Power and Accountability in Medieval France</b>	<b>231</b>
Reviewed by Ellen Garrison	
<b>Archives: Recordkeeping in Society</b>	<b>234</b>
Reviewed by Ben Alexander	
Frank Boles, <b>Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts</b>	<b>238</b>
Reviewed by Timothy L. Ericson	

## Society of American Archivists

Council Meeting Minutes—August 16 and 20, 2005	<b>243</b>
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<b>Editorial Policy</b>	<b>256</b>
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FROM THE EDITOR

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## Images and Initiatives

Philip B. Eppard concluded his nine years as editor of the *American Archivist* by assembling and editing the content in this issue, for which the Society and I are most grateful. Under his leadership the journal reached and maintained timeliness. Long-time readers of the journal appreciate the significance of this accomplishment. The most important of his contributions is, however, the quality of the articles appearing in the journal. In his last column, with his typical modesty, Phil hoped that the *American Archivist* had made “contributions to the archival literature that helped the profession strengthen its abilities to carry out the essential work of managing and preserving our documentary heritage.” Readers will join me in celebrating his accomplishment. As the SAA Council noted, “the Society of American Archivists owes a debt of gratitude and expresses its sincere thanks to Philip B. Eppard for advancing the professional discourse through his nine-year editorship of the *American Archivist*.”

With this issue I have begun to learn the production process by taking these fine contributions through it with the help of copy editor Meg Moss and director of publishing, Teresa Brinati. Jeanette Bastian continues to provide exemplary leadership in assembling reviews of the many important books in our ever-growing professional literature. I am most grateful to these colleagues and the Society for supporting me in this new endeavor.

In his inspiring presidential address, “Embracing the Power of Archives,” published in this issue, Rand Jimerson presents three compelling images of archives: first, the temple, acknowledging our control over the social (collective) memory; second, the prison, recognizing our control over preservation and security of records; and third, the restaurant, representing our role as interpreter and mediator between records and users. He urges us to “embrace the power of archives and use it for the good of humankind.” Under his leadership as president in 2004–2005, the Society identified three strategic initiatives: first, responding to the challenges of changing technology; second, ensuring that

archives and our profession reflect the diversity of society; and third, enhancing public awareness of archives. Each of the articles and reviews in this issue addresses these modern images and strategic initiatives in some way.

Ian Craig Breaden, in the essay awarded the 2005 Theodore Calvin Pease Award, provides a useful overview of the technical challenges of presenting digital audio documents on-line with a thoughtful method for evaluating how well on-line exhibits meet the goal of making archives better understood by the public. Laura Millar challenges us to consider the role of archival description as a tool for institutional and social accountability. She compares the traditional model of archival description with description in the continuum-based model and analyzes how well each model provides recordkeeping accountability. Millar also provides a useful review of American, Canadian, and Australian theory and practice. Accountability is certainly one of the pillars of the temple and description can enhance public awareness of archives. Millar finds, however, that relationships with records creators, and the expectations of society as a whole, complicate accountability in both models.

Patricia Galloway examines the relationship between archives and power in her study of Dunbar Rowland and the early years of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History. Rowland indeed recognized and embraced the power of archives, albeit to tell only one story. Galloway's sober reflections on this heritage demonstrate the cogency and urgency of our goal to ensure that archives and the archival profession reflect the diversity of society. Kyong Rae Lee provides another sobering view of the relationship between archives and power in her history of the management of presidential records in the Republic of Korea (South Korea) since 1948. She illustrates the close relationship between political structures and public archives and concludes that democratic entities are necessary to establish and manage archival systems and to ensure public access to them.

The last three articles address the challenges of changing technology. In the first, Reagan Moore describes data grid technology, which supports management of electronic records located on multiple storage systems and provides the software needed for infrastructure independence. The article is a useful explication of a technology with practical applications for managing digital records, ensuring their authenticity, establishing trusted recordkeeping systems, and migrating them through time to new hardware and software environments. Margaret L. Hedstrom, Christopher A. Lee, Judith S. Olson, and Clifford A. Lampe examine how users might understand and use digital documents that are preserved using both migration and emulation. Our choices among today's strategies for digital preservation technologies will affect how future users understand the documents that we preserve for their use. Finally, Wendy M. Duff, Amy Marshall, Carrie Limkilde, and Marlene van Ballegooie consider the task of understanding how best to educate ourselves to cope with rapidly

changing electronic preservation strategies. They discuss the difficulties of providing meaningful instruction in a rapidly changing field and to a diverse audience with a wide range of educational background, technical skills, and institutional settings. The authors challenge educational providers to evaluate how well continuing education programs actually affect work in archival institutions. Archivists are not solo practitioners; we accomplish our mission through institutions. Training individual archivists does little if their skills do not contribute to the mission of their institutions in their daily work. The authors also advocate building shared resources for education, for both pre-appointment and continuing education.

Together these three papers, taken with Ian Craig Breaden's paper on sound archives, provide an excellent overview of contemporary research and practice addressing the challenges of changing technology. Duff, Marshall, Limkilde, and van Ballegooie also point to the effectiveness of problem-centered learning, which is the daily life of practitioners, although few of us have structured educational resources at hand. Their article and questionnaire provide a structured method for each of us to identify the skills that we and our organizations need and a path to obtain them. These articles cite sources and Web sites that provide tools for self-directed learning and also help us think about how to make best use of limited resources for continuing education, both as individual practitioners and for our organizations.

As I complete the editorial work for this issue and look forward to following it through production until I see it in my hands and know that it is in your hands, I am only too aware of the challenges before me in the next three years. I encourage all members of the Society to contribute to professional discourse through the *American Archivist*. We welcome your research articles, case studies, and book reviews. We also welcome letters to the editor and encourage debate in the *American Archivist*.

Terry Cook, a Canadian archivist and educator, wrote in *American Archivist* in 2000 that "It is important for the profession to remember that the opposite of practical is impractical, not theoretical. Theory is rather the complement to practice, and theory and practice should interact and cross-fertilize each other. . ." The *American Archivist* will continue to encourage and promulgate archival theory, research methodology, and practice. Practitioners, faculty, and students are all partners in advancing the archival profession. I hope to bring a sense of intellectual excitement to the *American Archivist* and to readers in all settings and stages of learning. And I know that you will help me.

Mary Jo Pugh  
March 2006